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## REP. KATE HOGAN'S SENIOR NEWS



### Legislative Preview: Rep. Hogan's Bills for the 192<sup>nd</sup> Session

One thing that hasn't changed with the pandemic is the flurry of activity at the State House at this time of year. The Massachusetts Legislature has kicked off its 192<sup>nd</sup> session by filing more than 6,000 bills.

As I step into my new role as Speaker Pro Tem, I'll continue to serve as part of the House leadership team, working with my fellow lawmakers on legislation designed to help us recover from the pandemic and build resiliency for the future. I've highlighted below a few of the bills I filed that are of special interest to seniors in the Third Middlesex District.

**An Act to protect MassHealth applicants facing undue hardship (HD1705):** When MassHealth determines income eligibility for nursing home care, they look back five years to ensure that the applicant did not transfer their assets for less than fair market value. However, seniors often transfer assets without thought toward their MassHealth eligibility, future illnesses or injuries, or the need for nursing home care. This bill would establish criteria to be used by MassHealth to determine whether a penalty for a transfer of assets would create an undue hardship for an applicant for nursing home care.

**An Act to promote transparency in prescription drug prices (HD1646):** The rising cost of prescription drugs is one of the most pressing public health issues facing the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, the complex process of setting prescription drug prices has evaded impactful oversight and accountability. The legislation I filed acknowledges that a key step towards increasing transparency, and ultimately lowering the cost of pharmaceuticals, is to require state agencies to provide insight and analysis on which prescription drugs have the most burdensome price tag. Pharmaceutical companies would then be obligated to justify those price increases to legislators, state agencies, and health care policy groups.

**An Act Establishing an Oral Health Commission and Needs Assessment (HD2962):** Dental care is a critical component of overall health care, and yet we know there are underserved communities across the state facing barriers to accessing dental care. Data on oral health needs and access to care is extremely outdated, hindering Massachusetts' ability to understand the challenges we face and the policy solutions to pursue to ensure access to dental services. This bill would help legislators and practitioners better understand the oral health needs of residents across the state by establishing a special commission to conduct a statewide oral health needs assessment of both adult and pediatric residents and provide recommendations.

I have also refiled **An Act to improve oral health for all Massachusetts residents (HD3757)** that will increase access to oral health care for currently underserved populations by authorizing a mid-level provider called a dental therapist. These newly created dental therapists will be trained to perform essential dental care like filling cavities under the general supervision of a dentist, tapping into telehealth tools to share x-rays and consult on cases that are more complex. One of the most powerful impacts of authorizing dental therapists would be their ability to bring oral health care to our communities most in need and reach residents where they are – even in nontraditional settings like nursing homes.

Details on all of the bills I have filed are available on the Rep. Kate Hogan legislator profile page on the state legislature website ([malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov)). I welcome your feedback and invite you to stay tuned for more information on my legislative and budget priorities for seniors in the coming months.

**Contact Rep. Hogan:** If you need assistance or would like to contact me, please call me at (617) 722-2199 or email me at [Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov](mailto:Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov). Please also visit my new Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/RepKateHogan](https://www.facebook.com/RepKateHogan)

Kate

Kate Hogan, State Representative

Proudly represents Bolton, Hudson, Maynard, and Stow

State House, Room 163, Boston, MA, 02133 / Phone: (617) 722-2199 / [Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov](mailto:Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov)

District Office: Maynard Town Hall, 195 Main Street, Maynard, MA 01754 / Phone: (978) 897-1333